

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 and 8-12 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 4, 5, 8 and 10 are amended. The amendments introduce no new matter. Claim 7 is canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter recited in that claim.

Reconsideration of the application based upon the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the indication of allowability regarding claims 7 and 8. These claims are indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims. The amendments to independent claims 1, 4, 5 and 10 are taken in light of this indication of allowability. Specifically, the independent claims are amended to include indicated allowable subject matter of now-canceled claim 7.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116(b)(1) since the amendments place the application in condition for allowance based on the indication of allowability in the Office Action. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-4, 6 and 9-12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0145142 to Chen et al. (hereinafter "Chen") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,165,826 to Chau et al. (hereinafter "Chau"); and rejects claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Chen in view of Chau and U.S. Patent No. 5,576,230 to Guldi. These rejections are respectfully traversed.


Without conceding the interpretation, or combinations, of the applied references, and solely to expedite prosecution of this application, the independent claims are voluntarily amended to include the indicated allowable subject matter of now-canceled claim 7. The amendments to independent claims 1, 4, 5 and 10, to include the indicated allowable subject

matter of now-canceled claim 7, obviate the rejection of those claims. Claims 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 11 and 12 are also allowable at least for the respective dependence of these claims, directly or indirectly, on allowable independent claims 1 and 10, as well as for the separately patentable subject matter that each of these claims recites.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-6 and 8-12 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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JAO:JEG/hms

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